Popullution
The 1981 APHA Presidential Address

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When I was a candidate for election to the Executive Board of the American Public Health Association in 1975, I noted that over-population was one of the major personal and environmental health threats facing this nation and the world. I repeated this same theme when I was nominated for President-Elect of the APHA, and I still recognize this as an issue of the highest magnitude of importance.

The American Public Health Association was among the early leaders in policies and actions to attempt to control over-population. The APHA Governing Council has adopted policy statements on a number of occasions addressing the population problem. These statements commenced in 1959 and have continued since then.

We note that the issue of population has occupied the attention of thoughtful people through past ages as well as the present time. Plato and Aristotle were deeply concerned with the problem of regulating community size, as well as being advocates of family planning. Plato noted the need to stabilize population so people "will live pleasantly together with a prudent fear of poverty or war keeping them from begetting children beyond their means." Aristotle warned, "if no restriction is imposed on the rate of reproduction, and this is the case in most of our existent states, poverty is the inevitable result; and poverty produces in its turn civil dissention and wrong-doing." Aristotle even criticized the Spartans for their pro-natalist policies (that a father of three sons could be exempt from military services, a father of four from taxes) as it would utlimately ruin their equitable society, since in time, each family plot would be divided to the point of non-viability.

I have frequently observed this same phenomenon in my own State of New Mexico. Many of the early settlers of New Mexico were awarded huge Spanish land grants. The lands were tilled and irrigation ditches developed. It was a custom to divide family lands into increasingly smaller plots perpendicular to the ditches, or what we know as acequias. Ultimately, the subdivided agricultural lands left for each family member became too small to support the owners, who simply gave up and went on welfare. The lands then became tax delinquent, reverted to the State, and were subsequently bought in larger plots by the more wealthy agricultural interests.

Aristotle also noted that men do not know what it is that makes a state "great"; they judge greatness in numerical terms, by the size of the population, "but it is capacity rather than size, which should properly be the standard. . . . A great state is not the same as a populous state," he said.

India's Prime Minister Nehru stated that "Population control will not solve all of our problems, but it is certain that none can be solved without it."

The 1968 report of the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Development observed that "Population must come under control and be stabilized at some number which civilization can agree upon. Otherwise, the best use of natural resources will be inadequate and the apocalyptic forces of disease and famine will dominate the earth."

In 1969, the National Academy of Sciences issued a report, *Resources and Man,* which concluded that a world population of 10 billion "is close to (if not above) the maximum that an intensively managed world might hope to support with some degree of comfort and individual choice."

In the same vein, in 1972, the United States Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, chaired by John D. Rockefeller, III, concluded, "We have looked for, and have not found, any convincing economic arguments for continued national population growth. The health of our economy does not depend on it. The vitality of business does not depend on it. The welfare of the average individual does not depend on it." That Commission report also recommended that "immigration levels not be increased. . . . ."

In 1974, then California Governor Ronald Reagan issued a Proclamation on World Population Stabilization, that "The US can only become weaker with a burgeoning population. We need sound population policies today as never before."

Estimating that the World's population could stabilize at 10.5 billion by the year 2110, a 1981 United Nations report warns of the implications of such growth. "Though the 10.5 billion . . . is less alarmist than the figures projected by other studies," the report notes, "it still means that the global population would have grown to be two and one-half times larger than the present 4.4 billion. . . . Even during the present century, we might not be able to claim to have provided for the basic needs of nearly half of the World's population.

Recently, the Global 2000 Report to the President, submitted in 1980 by the US Department of State and the Council on Environmental Quality, indicated that if present trends continue the world in the year 2000 will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically, and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now. Serious stresses involving population, resources, and environment are clearly visible ahead. Despite greater material output, the world's people will be poorer in many ways than they are today.

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For hundreds of millions of the desperately poor, the outlook for food and other necessities of life will be no better. For many it will be worse. Barring revolutionary advances in technology, life for most people on earth will be more precarious in the year 2000 than it is now—unless the nations of the world act decisively to alter current trends.

This, in essence, is the picture emerging from the US Government's projections of probable changes in world population, resources, and environment by the end of the century as presented in the Global 2000 Study. They do not predict the worst scenario. Rather, they depict conditions that are likely to develop if there are no changes in public policies, institutions, or rates of technological advance, and if there are no wars or other major disruptions. A keener awareness of the nature of the current trends, however, may induce changes that will alter these trends and the projected outcome.

The Global 2000 Report to the President stresses that rapid population growth worldwide is a major factor contributing to resource and energy shortages and to environmental damage which may become irreversible in the next 20 years, unless current policies and programs change.

Principal findings of the report indicate that more serious problems will continue developing in terms of worldwide food production, availability of agricultural lands, petroleum production, depletion of non-renewable energy resources, water shortages, significant losses of world forests, serious deterioration of agriculture soils, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and ozone-depleting chemicals, and extinctions of plant and animal species.

As recently as July 1981, President Ronald Reagan joined with other international leaders in supporting efforts to stem international population growth. Meeting with the Heads of State of Canada, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Italy, and France in Ottawa, Reagan joined in a policy statement that reads, in part: "We are deeply concerned about the implications of world population growth. . . . We recognize the importance of these issues and will place greater emphasis on international efforts in these areas."

This is not the first time the United States has endorsed the adoption of international population policies or resolutions calling for individual nations to adopt national policies. Yet, the United States remains among those few countries without its own official population coordination and stabilization mechanism.

It might seem strange for me, coming from the arid southwestern United States, to state that I have had a concern about population levels and over-population as far back as I can remember. My father, still a conservationist, was an early-day conservationist with the US Forest Service, and later with the US Soil Conservation Service. While still in grade school, I had absorbed many of his teachings and had developed a working philosophy about the concept of "carrying capacity." I would walk with him as he pointed out different range plant species, note their "palatibility ratings," and mentally convert these into a statement of "X" head of cattle, or "Y" head of sheep for a given area. Therefore, I always knew that every animal species, including the human animal, must live in harmony with its environment and the resources available if it was to survive and prosper on a long-term basis.

Carrying capacity is related not only to space available, but more importantly to resources available. People flying over "empty" areas of the nation and the World may be tempted to think of this as potential expansion space for the human animal while forgetting that water, food, energy, soil, and other resources may be limiting factors.

The per capita destruction of our environment throughout the world has been greater during the past 35 years than ever in history; and, in this recent period, we have witnessed a greater toll on our environmental resources than the sum total since Mankind has been on Earth. The human animal's capacity to survive and function has evolved over millions of years within a particular set of environmental conditions. We are now altering that environment with little understanding and often little concern regarding the consequences of our actions.

Over one million years passed before the population of our species reached the one billion mark around 1850. Only 80 years passed before the second billion mark was reached, and in the last 45 years the population again doubled to 4 billion. The present world population is growing so rapidly that the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and most of the 9th billions will be added to the population within the next 40 years if the current rate of increase is maintained. When we consider the problems of hunger, poverty, depletion of resources, and over-crowding among the residents of our planet today, the future of human welfare looks grim indeed.

According to the National Agricultural Lands Study, domestic and international demand for farm products is expected to increase by as much as 85 per cent during the next 20 years, while the United States is irreversibly converting three million acres of farmland to other uses each year. Shopping centers, highways, industrial parks, schools and other public buildings, and subdivisions continue to gobble up some of our most fertile agricultural areas at alarming rates. Each day, twelve square miles of agricultural lands are converted to other uses. We should be as concerned over the loss of prime agricultural lands as we are over energy shortages.

In the past, America has lost farm land equal to the total area of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Delaware. An area of prime farm land equivalent to the entire State of Indiana may be paved over between now and the turn of the century. All of the prime farm land left in real estate-crazy Florida will probably disappear; and California, the biggest farm state, will lose up to 15 per cent of its best farm land.

The frontiers are gone and the loss of crop land is proceeding at a rate that will destroy the balance between food and people.

Asphalt has been termed "the land's last crop."

Population pressures on natural resources contribute to international aggression to obtain resources, and cause nations to seek additional "living space" through international aggression. The problems of resources depletion and over-population heighten the chances of global instability and

nuclear holocaust. There is no greater possibility of reducing the threat of nuclear war than through stabilizing population. Consider what is happening around us:

- Desertification is subjecting millions of people to poor nutrition, disease, and starvation;
- Over-fishing is leading to reduced catches;
- Over-pumping is leading to water shortages;
- Destruction of tropical forests is leading to climatic changes, flooding and species destruction;
- Over-grazing is leading to starvation and erosion; and
- Population increases are out-stripping the production of commodity after commodity on a per-capita basis.

The continued destruction of plant and animal species, and of their genetic heritage, may distort the future course of evolution and genetic diversity on this plant. Population increases are creating pressures to exploit the limited remaining areas of this nation and the World. Population increases not only lower the quality of life for humans, but are the principal reason for the extinction of many plant and animal species.

The National Academy of Sciences says that we are losing jungles at such an unexpectedly rapid rate that it raises the alarm for an emergency global effort to ease the impact. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences warns that "The destruction of these vast ecosystems without development of ways for replacing them with others equally productive foredooms a large portion of the human race to misery and portends instability for the entire globe by the year 2000." Tropical rain forests have been the premier environment for evolution, have supplied a host of materials and food plants, are a major source of new natural products, are important elements in the planet's climatic system; and are key regulators of water supply. They have covered so much land that their loss might significantly change energy balances that influence weather and exacerbate the accumulation of heat-absorbing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The National Research Council estimates that this appalling and unnecessary destruction affects an area the size of Massachusetts every month.

It is paradoxical that we read of resource shortages rather than people surpluses—as if the Earth is to blame. And we commonly speak of air and water pollution, rather than people pollution.

Rhetoric to the contrary, evidence indicates that the majority of the World's people live in countries whose governments openly indicate their desires to lower the rate of population increase. Birth rates have been significantly reduced in many of the developing nations of the world. Poor, illiterate people can be taught that the rate of reproduction must be decreased to improve the quality of life and world security. Yet nearly one-half of the world's couples go to bed each night unprotected from unplanned or unwanted pregnancies.

Immigration, both legal and illegal, accounts for at least 50 per cent of US population growth. If this continues, we will see no end to population growth in the United States despite the current responsible attitude being displayed toward family size by couples in their reproductive years. Immigration policies must be based on current conditions, not those of the past century when we still had a frontier and were not already exceeding our carrying capacity. More than half the population of some lesser developed countries would like to come to the United States. The situation has changed from the time we had a big, empty country and an economic need for settlers. Things have changed since 1883 when Emma Lazarus penned the words enscribed on the Statute of Liberty:

> "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free."

Now the US population is some four and one-half times what it was when those noble thoughts were written, and we now better understand the deleterious impact of population growth out-stripping resources. The US would now be close to zero population growth were it not for immigration of individuals, many of whom have high birthrate patterns. A nation cannot be a nation without a border. The United States took in more aliens last year than all other countries combined. The number of illegal immigrants entering the United States could reach 161 million during the next 20 years. These population pressures are already being felt among the minorities in our society. The US might be considered the world's most over-populated nation if we compare resource consumption per capita.

Many communities in the United States are now openly and assertively resisting future growth. Federal, state, and local governments can encourage or discourage population stabilization.

Population pressures in large areas of our nation have led to the mining of water without it being replenished at the rate it is being utilized. Perhaps the best example of this is in the Ogallala Aquifer underlying vast areas of several western states, in which the water table is falling between two and five feet per year, which means that the aquifer could be exhausted in 40 years.

Much of the southwestern United States has been termed an "oasis civilization" that depends on a few rivers, particularly the Colorado. For some 20 years, the Colorado's once-awesome flow has been over-utilized to the extent that none of it now reaches its natural outlet into the Gulf of California.

California farmers are reported to pump 652 billion gallons more water than is replenished each year.

Once pristine, high mountain lakes and streams in the Rocky Mountains are receiving acid rain and snow, due primarily to pollution from power plants, the same as those in the Adirondacks in which fish are being killed by acid rain.

Over the past decade I have continued to express concern about the problems of over-population in my state and in the southwestern United States and the so-called Sun Belt in general. Factors beyond our immediate control are causing millions of people to migrate from the Frost Belt to the Sun Belt. Except for the problems of climate, this migration and the resulting over-population is serving to transfer the problems many of these migrants are attempting to leave. We in the southwest region are developing serious pollution of our air, water, and land. We are witnessing serious deterioration of the fragile environment in our val-

leys, mesas, and mountains. Unemployment is increasing and homicides have become more common than automobile deaths in the largest city in my state. These and other undesirable social, economic, and health problems are the known and expected manifestations of migration to the Sun Belt and the resultant over-population.

Perhaps populations should be viewed something like a giant amoeba, constantly pushing, probing, expanding, growing, engulfing, and finally destroying in its wake. An environmental barrier to such over-population may tend to halt its growth and movement unless it can expand and move in another direction. It seems senseless to me to keep attempting to adapt the environment, the economy, and non-renewable resources to over-population when the more rational approach would be to exert greater efforts to controlling this giant amoeba of over-population while we still have some remaining degree of environmental quality.

About a decade back, the old *Life Magazine* carried an editorial concerning over-population titled, "Won't Anybody Hear The Awful Truth?" Well, the awful truth still isn't being heard. Political leaders continue to cry for more growth while making futile attempts to solve problems created by or related to over-population. The problems include the energy crisis, pollution, housing, crime, hunger, crowding, deforestation, over-grazing, species extinction, restrictions on individual freedom, health threats, soil depletion, loss of agricultural lands, and water shortages.

Over-population must be viewed as the number one social, economic, health, and environmental problem facing this nation and the world. Too many political leaders continue to confuse progress with growth. Progress is simply change toward an established goal and does not imply or require growth.

A few years ago I copied someone's remarks about "popullution" as resulting from two selfish drives:

1) Exploitation of the blessings of the Earth in the name of something called progress, and

2) Abuse of the sex drive, which was designed to perpetuate the species rather than destroy it.

Similar to the principles of the Malthusian theory, too many members of the human species are already being destroyed by violence in over-populated areas in the same manner as suggested by laboratory research utilizing other animals. The target group in both cases is primarily young, healthy males in their reproductive years. Biologically, we know that population will ultimately be controlled by some stress such as war, famine, pestilence, environmental degradation, or congestion if not by rational behavior. People must curb population growth, not for whimsical aesthetic reasons, but for the very self-serving reason that we must protect our environment because it literally gives us life. The Earth and its resources are finite.

Population cannot continue to increase indefinitely in a finite world, and signs of resource shortages, social stresses, and environmental ills are widely apparent. As long as the human population remains uncontrolled, no program of resource conservation or environmental health can be successful for long. The Earth's ability to yield sustenance and absorb punishment in the form of pollution is not endless. Ultimately, the human animal must live in balance and harmony with its environment. We have been and continue to be, on a credit-card binge, borrowing against the future. Population will be controlled at some point—whether by war, pestilence, or disease—and it would seem to be more rational to control it through behavior modification while some semblance of environmental quality remains.

Efforts to control pollution are only treating the symptoms, not the causes, and are not effective preventive measures. The ultimate prevention and conservation issue has yet to receive our serious and organized attention.

Continued population growth and unmanaged demographic changes are eroding our ability to leave a healthy world and a quality environment for future generations.

We can no longer take for granted the renewal of our renewable resources—our crop lands, forests, streams, estuaries, beaches, and the biological diversity of species.

I am frequently alarmed by the observation that various types of public health personnel become so engrossed in their immediate day-to-day tasks that they seldom take the time to step back from their offices, clinics, laboratories, hospitals, and classrooms long enough to relate their endless and frustrating daily tasks to the issue which truly creates the priority personal and environmental health problems affecting all of us—the issue which has not been fully accepted for preventive programming by our society and legislative bodies,—the issue inadequately addressed by traditional public health programs and textbooks,—the cause of most of our environmental health ills, the staggering problem of over-population.

Public health and other personnel must realize that the undesirable symptoms of over-population are visible locally and regionally as well as nationally and globally. Even at the municipal, county, and regional levels, the population levels can be affected or controlled through attitudes; educational measures; demographic projections; environmental research, planning, and control; zoning and land-use; fiscal policies; economic incentives; cost assessment to those developmental interests creating growth; and critical analyses of all bond issues to determine if they are allowing, promoting, subsidizing, and/or creating growth.

Since the definition of environmental health and environmental quality is somewhat subjective, different peoples and cultures place different values on varying types of environments. Some people value living in apartments in urban areas, using subways, mixing with the masses, and enjoying the sophisticated cultural aspects of urban living. Others enjoy the opportunity of seeing nature through the use of moderan recreational vehicles and facilities in company with many others. Still other people enjoy the solitude of back-packing into wilderness areas and arctic-alpine mountain peaks.

We should recognize these varying physical and psychological needs and attempt to provide something for everyone, not everything for everybody.

In 1973, I was asked to discuss the issue of population levels at a meeting sponsored by the Albuquerque, New Mexico Urban Observatory (a metropolitan planning group). I was asked to indicate the impact of over-population on the

environment in that area. I chose to answer, in part, as follows:

> "You will know when you can no longer see the mountains.
>
> "You will know when you pay more for sewage treatment facilities.
>
> "You will know when traffic problems become worse and it takes twice or three times as long to get to work.
>
> "You will know when you have to move out of the city to find quiet and privacy.
>
> "You will know when you wake up to the constant background of noise that disrupts your sensibilities.
>
> "You will know when you have to travel further to find an uncrowded recreational spot.
>
> "You will know when you must wait in line for hours to launch your boat at your favorite marina.
>
> "You will know when a greater percentage of land is used for freeways and interchanges.
>
> "You will know when all your arable valley land has finally been relegated to subdivisions.
>
> "You will know when you have to ask a computer when you may use a campsite in your favorite recreational area.
>
> "You will know when we experience a constantly increasing number of air pollution alerts.
>
> "You will know when you finally realize there is no such thing as clean industry if it means more people. More people mean more water pollution, more vehicles, more air pollution, and more freeways.
>
> "And yes, you will know when people stop bragging about our beautiful vistas, our starlit nights, and our sparkling mountain streams."

Now, only eight years later, in 1981, that community has experienced many of the foregoing.

We cannot really expect to regain former environmental quality once it is lost. We cannot continue to grow without sacrificing many desirable qualities and amenities.

The human animal is altering and destroying some of the very conditions, environment, and ecological relationships which allowed for the evolution of modern man—through toxic chemicals, pesticides, hazardous wastes, pollution of the air and water, deforestation, over-grazing, all related to the demands of over-population. The environmental ravages to be experienced by the development of synfuels, the "forever" nature of radioactive tailings and wastes, the damages caused by uncontrolled strip-mining, and the destruction caused by acid-rain represent other examples of environmental degradation not yet fully understood. Nor do we know the impact of these by-products of over-population on the evolution of man, inasmuch as the human animal has been exposed to such influences for only an insignificant fraction of his evolutionary development.

With regard to the environment and the economy, let us not be misled into a process of "versus" or "either-or". A quality environment and a healthy economy are not mutually exclusive or contradictory expectations, but, in fact, are mutually interdependent. We cannot have an economy without an environment. "Ecology" and "economy" are both derivatives of the Greek word "ecos" (oikos) which means "house". An economist was a keeper of the house. An ecologist is the keeper of the house in which we *all* live—our environment—the place where we are all going to spend the rest of our lives.

It continues to be a matter of serious concern to me that the human animal sometimes seems more willing to suffer the health, social, economic, and environmental consequences of disease and pollution, rather than paying for environmental quality for this and future generations. Perhaps the human animal can slightly adapt to some degree of environmental degradation, but it is indeed alarming that the human animal might attempt to merely survive through adaptation rather than thrive in a quality environment. Population stabilization is the only real preventive endeavor, since curative programs to control the secondary problems of environmental degradation, energy shortages, transportation, land-use, congestion, crime, and famine have not and will not be effective without resolving the basic issue of over-population.

In relation to the problem, as personal and environmental health personnel:

We should support specific national and global actions and agreements to stabilize population levels through such mechanisms as education, racial justice, sexual equality, technology sharing, birth control, reorientation of social values and attitudes, demographic research and planning, and economic policies and incentives;

We should sharpen and utilize the tools of environmental epidemiology to better identify the current and future effects of environmental chemicals and stresses inasmuch as we still do not fully understand the effects of the environment or disease, disability, efficiency, morale, comfort, quality of life, life span, absenteeism, insurance rates, Medicaid and Medicare budgets, and other health care costs;

We should recognize that social security measures for the elderly are among the most effective population stabilization methodologies yet devised, inasmuch as such a system represents the economic security provided in the not-too-distant history of our country by a large number of children;

We should understand that the concern of environmentalists with the eco-system, endangered species, and the natural environment is a sound manifestation of interest in the entire natural system of which the human animal is a part, and that the environmental effects on wildlife and endangered species serve as an "early warning" or "preview of things to come" in accordance with the known and proven ecological maxim that "everything is connected to everything else";

We should realize that society has only recently allowed governmental curative efforts in such environmental problems as pollution of the air and water, noise pollution, and solid wastes; but has not yet reached the point of authorizing program efforts to effectively resolve problems concerning the basic priority issue of over-population;

We should change our collective attitudes and adjust to the fact that "bigger is not better" and that "growth is not progress";

We should constantly consider the sub-clinical, long-term, and genetic effects of environmental insults as well as the more obvious clinical effects;

We should have a better knowledge of the cost-benefits of health care as compared with the cost-benefits of a quality environment;

We should not let uninformed and naive politicians foster the erroneous belief that we cannot have both environmental quality and economic vitality;

We should insist that environmental protection standards and regulations be based on the needs of the environment and of man in his environment rather than on the latest polluter-professed "limits of technology";

We should ensure that our programs are properly designed and directed to current problems rather than comfortable tradition;

We should recognize that there is a price to be paid for a quality environment, but that this does not result in adverse economic consequences;

We should insist that environmental impact statements be utilized as decision-making tools rather than as mechanisms to justify environmentally adverse decisions already made;

We should recognize Man as a part of the environment rather than as a supreme being in the environment;

We should constantly remind our citizen and political leaders that environmental quality reaches beyond mere freedom from pollution, and includes such concerns as desertification, deforestation, water shortages, over-crowding, loss of agricultural lands, and species extinction;

We should insist that all governmental leaders at all levels of government develop mechanisms to ensure payment and internalization of the hidden and long-term costs of growth and pollution now instead of deferring these costs for future generations;

We should continue to emphasize the necessity of stabilizing population and reducing energy consumption rather than considering only the alternatives of continued growth and increasing energy demands;

We should join forces with the ecologists, conservationists, and other environmental activists whenever appropriate instead of criticizing these "Johnnies-come-lately" and being intent on territorial defense;

We should make every effort to ensure that government is truly responsive to the needs of the people, rather than just the wealthy and the elite corporations;

We should increase efforts to better research, understand, and control those environmental factors which create health problems;

We should demand that no significant environmental deterioration be permitted beyond current levels inasmuch as the environment, once degraded, is seldom restored;

We should guide national policy and priorities so that population stabilization and development of solar energy resources are as high a priority as putting a man on the Moon;

We should protect our environment in such a manner that future generations can enjoy the thrill of fresh brisk air, wilderness areas, trout in clear mountain streams, uncluttered mesas and vistas, wild geese on a cold morning, or solitude on a mountain peak;

We should ensure that population stabilization is an integral component of appropriate personal and environmental health programs as well as a basic and required emphasis for planning bodies such as Health Systems Agencies, State Health Planning and Development Agencies, Statewide Health Coordinating Councils, and Councils on Environmental Quality;

We should develop ideal family planning which is safe, effective, reversible, available to all, and culturally acceptable; and we should ensure that family planning is as basic as safe food, clean water, and clean air;

We should insist that women have a broad array of realistic choices including, but not limited to, child bearing;

We should continue to expand public information efforts regarding the problems of over-population and the means of intervention;

We should continue to research improved birth control methods for use by men;

We should join forces with other groups and recognize that adoption of a national population planning policy is long overdue, as the need for such a policy becomes more urgent every day;

We should recognize, and take steps to change, the currently popular rhetoric that blames environmentalists rather than greed for the nation's ills;

We should continue to show how population growth and demographic changes are at the root of many of the problems of our nation and the world;

We should insist on the adoption of a national land-use policy to identify and properly plan for the future conservation and utilization of our nation's agricultural, recreational, coastal, urban, and wet-land areas;

We should pay as much attention to the control of births as our profession has devoted to the control of deaths and disease; and

We should nurture and protect the environment rather than conquering and despoiling it.

The Earth serves man best when he has the humility to leave some of it alone. We have inherited the Earth from our parents, but more importantly, we are borrowing it from our children.

A few years ago, California-born writer, Richard Armour, penned the following doggerel:

> "So leap with joy, be blithe and gay,
> or weep my friends with sorrow;
> What California is today,
> the rest will be tomorrow."

(Wasn't that prophetic of what has been occurring since January 1981?)

In the mid-1800s, Alexis De Tocqueville wrote: "They (Americans) may finally become so engrossed in a cowardly love of immediate pleasure that their interest in their own future and that of their descendents may vanish and they will prefer tamely to follow the course of their destiny rather than make a sudden energetic effort necessary to set things right."

Such an "energetic effort" regarding over-population and "carrying capacity" should be considered the number one priority for all personal and environmental health personnel.